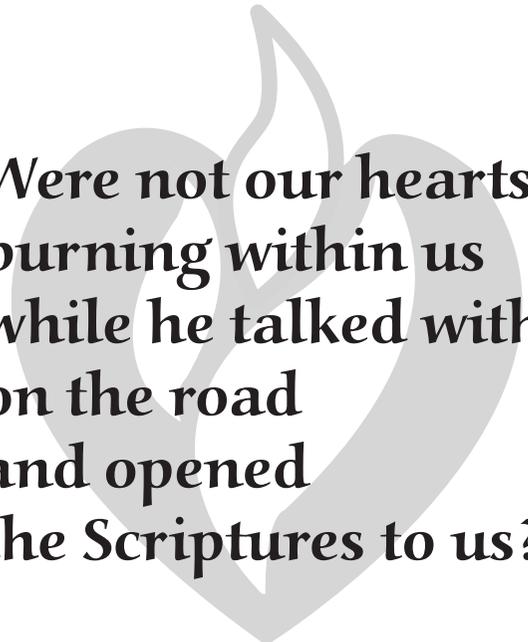


VOLUME 48
NUMBER 4
MAY 2008

The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal



**"Were not our hearts
burning within us
while he talked with us
on the road
and opened
the Scriptures to us?"**

Luke 24:32

The Lutheran Educator

The education journal
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
edited by faculty of Martin Luther College

ARTICLES

Hope in the Lord
John Schultz 100

A Primer on Staff Ministry
Lawrence Olson 102

**An Issue of Casuistry
at Ascension Lutheran Church
and School**
Kurt Rosenbaum 106

**Cultural Awareness for the
WELS Educator**
Michelle Ross 109

**Cooperating Classroom
Supervisors: “the Experience”
Teachers**
Paul A. Tess 116

Para’s
Alan Spurgin 121

Ask Questions
Paul L. Willems 124

DEPARTMENTS

As we see it
An 8-Track School in a CD World 99

Poetry: My Science Mind
Amy Biedenbender 101

Review 127

VOLUME 48

NUMBER 4

MAY 2008

Editor — Jack N. Minch

Editorial Board — Philip M. Leyrer, Cheryl A. Loomis, James F. Pope, David D. Sellnow

Editorial correspondence and articles should be sent to *The Lutheran Educator*, Editor, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Court, New Ulm, MN 56073. Phone 507-354-8221. Fax 507-354-8225. e-mail: lutheraneducator@mlc-wels.edu

The Lutheran Educator (ISSN 0458-4988) is published four times a year in October, December, February, and May by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284. Periodical Postage Paid at Milwaukee, WI.

Rates: One year—USA/\$12.00—single copy/\$3.00. Canada/\$12.84—single copy/\$3.21. All other countries—air mail \$18.80. Postage included, payable in advance to Northwestern Publishing House. Write for multi-year rates. For single issue only, Wisconsin residents add 5% sales tax, Milwaukee County residents add 5.6% tax.

Subscription Services: 1-800-662-6093 extension 8 (Milwaukee 414-615-5785). Write NPH, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. Order online: www.nph.net/periodicals

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Educator*, %Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284.

Copyright ©2008 by Martin Luther College. Requests for permission to reproduce more than brief excerpts are to be addressed to the editor.



An 8-Track School in a CD World

OK. I admit to having owned an 8-Track player. I'm of that vintage. My 8-Track fit nicely under the dash of my first car. There was something special about that music machine. Its whirring noise was matched only by the hum of my car's transmission. I even looked forward to the "clunk" that signaled the transition to the next song. Unfortunately, technology made the 8-Track obsolete around the time I bought my second car.

In his book, *An 8-Track Church in a CD World*, Robert N. Nash Jr. laments how churches (even 11 years ago, at the time of the book's publishing) seem to live in the past. Nash points to worship practices and church customs that, in his opinion, are as out of sync with the present time as an 8-Track is in our age—the CD world.

That book got me thinking about schools, our schools. Are they like the churches Nash describes or are they different? If you were to compare a classroom in a 2008 WELS school with one from, say 1963, what differences would you see? In classrooms where student uniforms are not the norm, dress would definitely be different. T-shirts, jeans and tennis shoes have replaced button-down shirts, dresses and shiny black shoes. The students wearing those clothes look a little different too. To a greater degree they reflect the communities in which our schools are located. Technological improvements would also stand out, as students in even the earliest grades use a mouse to point and click.

While these and numerous other external changes have taken place in our schools, thankfully and unabashedly some things have remained the same. Caring Christian teachers still point their students to Jesus, who loves them like a shepherd his sheep. Conscientious Christian teachers still model the faith to their students, showing them that the Christian faith is real and alive. Concerned Christian teachers still patiently work with students to help them develop their God-given gifts for a life of useful service. Committed Christian teachers still go about their calling with the knowledge and joy that when they serve others, they serve the Lord.

If, in spite of these things, our schools don't look like other schools—if they seem to be 8-Track schools in a CD World—I'm OK with that. Our schools are still giving children what is best for them.

Not long ago someone asked me if I owned an iPod. I said "no." With my (8-) track record, I'll probably buy one right before they become obsolete. That's OK. If all else fails, I can always listen to my albums.

JFP



...and others

Hope in the Lord

John Schultz

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Lamentations 3:22-26

It is 586 BC and Jerusalem, the city of David and Solomon, home of the temple, has fallen before the victorious armies of Babylon. The city has been destroyed. The temple and its God-given rituals for worship of the true God have been laid waste. The people of Judah endured starvation from the long siege, terrible suffering, and finally, long exile into Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah was an eyewitness to this divine judgment. Weeping and lamenting its terrible destruction, Jeremiah sings its funeral song in his book Lamentations.

God inspired Lamentations not only for a history lesson on the fate of Israel, but for important spiritual lessons to be learned from it. God used the Babylonians to carry out his divine judg-

ment. The books of Jeremiah and Lamentations make clear that Israel's woes were caused by their gross and willful sins against God. The book of weeping and lamenting rightly ends with contrition and repentance. These spiritual truths written for ancient Israel are more than relevant to us today.

As we read the book, we find that in the middle the message of Lamentations reaches a high point. The focus is on God's goodness. He is the God of love, faithfulness, hope and salvation. At last there is real hope. In spite of the woes around them, his (God's) compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (3:22-23)

Surrounded by darkest night, Jeremiah knows that the Lord God, whose just anger has destroyed Jerusalem, has given him the promise that in due time Israel would return from their captivity and again rebuild the city and temple. This sure promise of God has given him hope. Now he quietly waits for its fulfillment and God's salvation.

Oh, what patient hope and constant

faith mean for our lives as workers in Christ’s kingdom! This patient hope is not resignation to seemingly unchangeable sorrowful conditions in which we may find our selves, but a sure and living trust in the promises of God. His help cannot fail us. And, oh, it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord, for with the sweet song of his approaching help, we have comfort and new courage to face our challenges and opportunities.

Read some more: Jeremiah 29:10-14

Prayer:

Be still , my soul; the Lord is on your side;

Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In every change he faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul; your best, your heavenly

friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul; your God will undertake
To guide the future as he has the past.
Your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;

All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know

His voice who ruled them while he lived below.

CW 415, st. 1-2

John Schultz served as principal/administrator of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, MN. He is currently retired and living in New Ulm, MN.

My Science Mind

Flowers and trees
Oceans and seas
Trial and error
Explosions with terror
Insects and mammals
All of God’s animals
Newton and Edison
Doctors and medicine
Skeleton and skin
Creation of kin

Lightning, thunder and rain
Tornado, hurricane
Sun, moon and stars
Saturn and Mars
Ramps and wheels
Nutrition in meals
Cars and bikes
Electricity strikes
All you will find
In my science mind

~Amy Biedenbender

A Primer on Staff Ministry

Lawrence Olson

During the 1980s, congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) began to place people into ministry positions different from the common categories of pastor and teacher, and individuals started

servicing in areas such as family ministry or evangelism. As a response to that grass-roots movement, three different committees were appointed by synodical leaders to study the issue of alternative forms of ministry. This led to the synod, in its 1991 convention, authorizing a program to train and certify individuals for what we now call staff ministry. When that program began in January 1993, the number of staff ministers serving in congregations was in the single digits; today there are about 120 WELS staff ministers; two-thirds of them are serving in local churches, while the



remainder others are in non-parish ministry settings.

The phrase "staff ministry" was chosen as a pragmatic and descriptive term, one meant to reflect the fact that it refers to people who are serving in public "ministry" as a member of a "staff." However,

since the term is virtually unique to the WELS (in the last 15 years, I have seen it only once in print outside of our circles in the sense that we use it), it often needs to be explained.

A staff minister, like a pastor or teacher, is an individual who has been called by God through a group of believers to serve in their name and on their behalf. The nature of that service, that ministry, is defined by the call itself. While pastors are trained for the broadest scope of ministry and for theological leadership, and teachers are trained in Christian classroom education, staff

ministers receive theological training and practical skills to equip them to serve in other specific areas of parish ministry. Those areas will vary from congregation to congregation, based on a variety of factors such as local needs and opportunities and the gifts and responsibilities of others called to that congregation, but they generally fall into several basic categories:

1. *Outreach* God calls his church to “preach the good news” (Mark 16:15) in order to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19), and those who work in outreach ministry help congregations carry out programs of evangelism and assimilation in order to bring people into the congregation and to help them fit in.
2. *Parish Education* The Great Commission involves both outreach and nurture. Although a staff minister serving in one of the approximately 30% of our congregations that operate a Lutheran elementary school may have some responsibilities in it, the bulk of the work would focus on other aspects of a church’s teaching ministry: Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible studies for youth and adults, and mid-week programming for children.
3. *Youth and Family Ministry* Youth ministry, in keeping with Deuteronomy 6, is considered as an integrated part of a broader ministry to the family. The goal of this area is to provide biblical support to couples and families as we partner with them to build marriages and families that are committed to Christ and to each other and are

equipped to pass down the faith from one generation to another.

4. *Member Care* Much of “public” (i.e. “representative”) ministry happens in private, behind the scenes, as called workers serve people quietly, one-on-one and heart-to-heart. Staff ministers work in this area by assisting with shut-in visits, hospital work, regular parish visitation, and possibly counseling.
5. *Administration* Ministry needs to be

*A staff minister, like
a pastor or teacher, is
an individual who
has been called by
God through a group
of believers to serve in
their name and on
their behalf.*

administered, and some staff ministers shoulder some of the management responsibilities of a congregation through involvement with organizing, planning, communicating, coordinating, and budgeting.

6. *Music* There seems to be a growing recognition of the value of having a person on the church staff with time dedicated to supporting the worship life of the congregation, especially through music. Sometimes that person is a called teacher who has parish

music responsibilities in addition to classroom duties; in other cases it is a person called as a staff minister.

Describing those general areas, in the abstract, is easy enough. What sometimes makes it difficult for people who are wondering “What does a staff minister do?” is that most positions will focus a person’s responsibilities on perhaps one or two of those areas ... but they could be any of them. However, a common thread is that the positions have a more limited focus to them, unlike the broader scope that most pastoral positions have.

In Acts 6, we read that the Jerusalem congregation expected their “deacon” candidates to be “full of the Spirit and wisdom;” the Seven needed both spiritual maturity and practical aptitude, characteristics that are still essential for those who would serve in the contemporary form of the diaconate that we in the WELS call staff ministry. Martin Luther College (MLC) understands our assignment to include building those characteristics as we train candidates for ministry.

MLC offers both degree and certificate options within the Staff Ministry

Table 1: Religion and Ministry Courses for the Staff Ministry Program

Religion Courses

- Biblical History and Literature I
- Biblical History and Literature II
- Biblical History and Literature III
- Christian Doctrine I
- Christian Doctrine II
- Lutheran Confessional Writings

Ministry Courses

- The Theology and Practice of Ministry
- Biblical Interpretation
- Introduction to Youth and Family Ministry
- Parish Education
- Foundations of Evangelism
- Congregational Assimilation and Retention
- Caring and Counseling
- Parish Visitation
- Organization and Administration in the Parish
- Developing and Training Leadership
- Teaching Religion
- Lutheran Worship

Program. A four-year program that leads to a bachelor's degree provides an individual with certification as a staff minister and makes that person eligible for a call from any of the congregations or calling bodies from within the WELS. Two five-year programs add a second major to a person's program, either elementary education or parish music. All three of these degree programs include MLC's common core of general education courses, a foundational curriculum in theology, a component of practical courses in ministry, and experiential education in the form of early field experience and a semester-long internship. Listed in Table 1 are the religion and ministry courses taken by all students in any of the staff ministry degree programs.

Second-career students who are 35 years of age or older can become certified as a staff minister apart from a degree program by completing the religion, professional, and experiential requirements of the program. In addition, there is a non-parish certification available for individuals who are called to an area of service that is outside of a congregational setting, such as administrators or development directors; this is a theological certification only, involving the six religion courses and The Theology and Practice of Ministry course, and does not make an individual eligible for a call into a parish setting.

In addition to classes offered during the regular semesters, courses are available in summer sessions, through online study, and on occasion at extension locations. Our goal is to provide

academic integrity, professional competence, and program flexibility in order to best serve the needs of our congregations and of our current and prospective staff ministers.

There is no difference in the staff ministry training that we provide for men or women, just as there is no difference in MLC's training of male and female students for the teaching ministry. Distinctions based on gender are determined by the congregations or calling bodies as they establish the responsibilities of their specific calls.

You will have the opportunity, in subsequent issues of *The Lutheran Educator*, to hear some individuals currently serving as staff ministers describe the specific ministry responsibilities that they have been called to carry out. We hope that this approach will allow us to provide some specific and concrete examples of what staff ministers do.

In the Old Testament church the Levites worked along with the priests to carry out ministry, and after the time of Christ deacons served along with the priests and the bishops. In a somewhat similar way, staff ministers today are joining pastors, teachers, and lay members of congregations in carrying out the mission God has given to his Church. May God bless us as we all work together! 🌱

Lawrence Olson teaches at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN. He is the director of the staff ministry program.

An Issue of Casuistry at Ascension Lutheran Church And School

Kurt Rosenbaum

The issue

In the summer of 2005, our faculty, staff, and elected leaders were all geared up to enter a new school year with a record enrollment. We had completed our budgeting process with precise calculations and had committed our plan to God's direction. Then the bottom fell out.

In a one-week period and for a variety of reasons, twenty percent of our families notified us to say they would not be sending their children back to our school, even though they had all pre-registered several months earlier and had indicated that Ascension was their plan for the following year.

Serious budget shortfalls were certain, and this in a very difficult financial time for our congregation. Would the congregation be able to keep the school open?

The background

Several years prior to this situation, we had daughtered a congregation in the

next county. This process took a large contingent of members—and strong ones, at that—away from our congregation, and that meant that their financial support—also strong—would be lost too.

For three years we had been wrestling with serious budgetary shortfalls, but God's grace had kept us barely afloat each of those years. We often wondered how it happened.

As this particular budget cycle began, we were at the depths of the experience. The balancing of the budget was an excruciating process, and many cuts had to be made. We were naturally pleased as a congregation when a balanced budget was finally presented to and approved by the congregation. This had occurred only two weeks before the mass exodus became known.

The resolution

The congregation now faced a very real challenge. Could we keep our school open? Would we be forced to close it after only seven years of operation?

A series of three open forums (one en masse in connection with a worship service; one during the Bible study hour with division into three focus groups; one held in members' homes as small cottage meetings) was planned. The question was bluntly presented: "Can we keep our school open?" Related questions about narrowing the negative cash flow situation and recruiting more families were also investigated. After about three months of soul-searching, the congregation resoundingly restated its support for the school, and a campaign to retire the debt was begun. The congregation concluded this experience with a Celebration Sunday of great rejoicing!

The application of casuistry principles

God neither commands nor forbids operating a Lutheran elementary school. For more than twenty years, Ascension had existed without a school. We would have to examine this issue from a variety of angles to determine if God was guiding us to keep our young school open or to close it and direct our resources into something else.

In retrospect, I am very pleased at how we faced this issue as a congregation. The guidelines suggested by Theodore Graebner were not followed consciously, but I think they were followed nonetheless.

The law of love

The school and its staff had enjoyed a remarkable amount of support from the congregation members prior to this

event. When the crisis began, no one was actually willing to bring up the topic of considering the viability of the school for fear that it would be a harm to us teachers. Conversely, the teachers and I knew that all things had to be put on the table for discussion and consideration for the good of the congregation. So the suggestion to consider closing the school actually came from me. Was it God's will that we continue this particular ministry any longer? We would wrestle with that.

"All things are yours"

We put to use our best efforts in studying and solving this crisis. We recognized that a school was not a direct command from God; however, we also realized that God had used it to bring about some amazing blessings at Ascension, such as the involvement of more people (including the called workers) in the life of the congregation. We spoke of the families that had come into our membership through this one ministry and whether there would be any way immediately feasible to reach people like this through another means. We explored ways of bringing the expenses and the income into closer harmony. We sought the input of every member.

Freedom of the Spirit

We were regularly reminded throughout of God's rich blessings in the past, most notably his work of redemption through Jesus. That was, after all, why we even existed as a congregation and a

Rosenbaum

school. We restudied our mission and examined whether the school fit that mission anymore. As we reflected, we also acknowledged that a school is not a command, and that was a liberating feeling. It would not be a sin if we determined in the end to close the school. It allowed us to look forward in a positive way as we searched for the best way to carry out God's directive.

Law of the royal priesthood

Through the process of the three open forum opportunities, almost every member of the Ascension was permitted, invited, even encouraged to weigh in. Even students who'd graduated were polled, and each comment was given due consideration. Families in the school who were not members of Ascension could offer their viewpoints as well. No one was too unimportant to share a thought or a solution.

The absolute right of the believer to the ministrations of grace

I would submit that this particular principle didn't have much application to our situation. But I would also say that regardless of which side of the issue any member took, it did not lessen the harmony we shared as members. In fact, we recognized long before we knew the outcome that we had already received bountiful blessings just for having gone through the process. We determined then that a Celebration Sunday with all the stops pulled would be an appropriate event regardless of what decision

was reached. With that view, each member's opinion was respected, and we continued to see each other as God's people and brothers and sisters in faith. We worshiped together in the spirit of love and unity.

The sanction of the conscience

When questions or comments were raised about the closing of the school, each was received with love and answers were provided or researched. Several members I know raised serious questions about the large expense the school incurred. Both formally and informally the gentle teaching occurred. By the time the final decision of the Council was presented for the congregation's ratification, there was unanimous approval. We had faced the problem square on, and with God's help, we reached a solid and unified result. To God be the glory! ✠

Kurt Rosenbaum is a 1984 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College. He is principal at Ascension Lutheran School, Sarasota, Florida.



Cultural Awareness for the WELS Educator

Michelle Ross

WELS EDUCATORS are in a called position to proclaim the Word of God faithfully. By their faithful service to their calling, they desire to be effective and reach all students, in all subject matter. By considering students' learning styles and background knowledge, classroom and school atmosphere and so forth, educators hope to create valuable learning environments. But what about culture? Have educators adequately considered culture as another factor that will affect the learning environment? What about the subconscious aspects of culture that may be influencing attitudes and behaviors in the classroom? This article will dig into a few of the complex issues involved with multicultural education and highlight the importance of cultural awareness as a foundation. Some suggestions and applications will also be offered for educators interested in developing cultural awareness and improving multicultural atmosphere in the classroom.

WELS educator demographics

Although the demographics of WELS congregations and student bodies are changing, the administration and body of called workers are still predominantly White. Using data concerning graduates

of Martin Luther College (MLC) available through the college admissions office (Gwen Kral, personal communication, November 3, 2006), it appears that currently at least 97% of WELS educators are White and about 3% are ethnically/racially diverse. This is well below the national average for degree-granting institutions since 1976, which is 15-30% minority population (NCES, 2005).

Because the WELS is heavily populated by White members in both its churches and schools, it is important to consider if there is even a need for any multicultural training. Although currently the majority of WELS students are White, 88% in the 2005-2006 school year (Verona Krueger, personal communication, Nov. 1, 2006), with the increasingly diverse population across the United States, there is reason to believe that WELS student populations will continue to diversify. There is also a definite need to help all students mature into loving Christians who are concerned and aware citizens of society; therefore, curriculums which promote understanding and tolerance, stemming from Christian love, are vital. This begins with educators who are aware and concerned.

MLC has incorporated multicultural courses into the curriculum and sup-

ports students who defer a call for work in mission settings. However, many educators who graduated earlier than 2000 may not have had the benefits of these programs. Some districts of the Synod may have incorporated multicultural issues into professional development, which is surely beneficial, although the content of such inservices or programs can vary greatly. Regardless of previous education, all educators can benefit from continued efforts to stay current in educational trends, such as multicultural education.

Definition of multicultural education

Most educators in the United States today have heard the term “multicultural education”; this concept has grown in popularity since the 1990s, and many teacher training programs now include one or more courses in multicultural issues or multicultural education (Durodoye, 1998; Weiner, 2005). However, “multicultural education” often has a different meaning to different people. For example, one program may teach specific skills to work with students of a diverse population, while another may focus on addressing the existing stereotypes. After investigating this topic in depth, it is this author’s contention that the quality multicultural education grows out of cultural awareness on the part of the educator.

Awareness as a foundation for multicultural education

Educators may agree upon the need for

multicultural education, but this does not make educators multiculturally competent. Sue (2003), a leading researcher in the area of multicultural education, cautions that the road to cultural competence is a rocky one. Awareness, knowledge and skills have been found to be the three items that lead to successful cultural competence and multicultural education; the same research has shown that having cultural awareness is foundational to improving multicultural knowledge and skills (Durodoye, 1998; Richardson & Molinaro, 1996; Sue & Sue, 2003). Behavior is unlikely to change if one is unaware of the need to change; therefore, awareness must come first (Broderick & Blewitt, 2003). With awareness, educators can adjust their behavior to incorporate multicultural knowledge and skills to reach all students more effectively. There are large amounts of research indicating that White educators do need to improve awareness and techniques regarding multiculturalism (Stevens & Charles, 2005; Sue & Sue, 2003; Townsend, 2002; Weiner, 2005).

Because cultural awareness is thought to be a prerequisite for cultural competence, educators should improve awareness by analyzing their own personal culture, the culture of their students and the potential issues that may arise from having diverse cultures in one setting. Cultural awareness takes a number of steps of understanding and thought processing. Two of these steps that will be considered here are recognizing attitudes, beliefs and bias; and recognizing

majority privilege.

Recognize attitudes, beliefs, bias

Behavior is influenced by one's beliefs and attitudes, according to some leading theorists such as Albert Bandura, B. F. Skinner and Edward Thorndike (Broderick & Blewitt, 2003). For example, teachers may notice a child's "bad attitude" before a negative behavior occurs. An educator must also recognize that the attitudes or beliefs he or she holds influence his or her behavior equally so. Culture and environment play a critical role in the development of attitudes and bias. Intentionally or not, an educator who has a bias regarding a certain culture or ethnicity will likely behave differently toward a student or parent of that culture or ethnicity. If one is not consciously aware of their bias, it is unlikely that any behavior will change; many White educators may never be confronted about biases or be forced to deal with them, since they are frequently trained by other White educators and work in a system that has been based upon the majority ideals of this nation (Sue & Sue, 2003). Educators must learn to understand the impact of their personal thought processes, including those regarding culture, upon students and they must consider whether a change could better meet the needs of all students. Consider this illustration: an educator was affected by a frightening incident in his or her youth involving someone of another race; he or she may harbor a negative or distrustful feeling toward others of that

race and that could impact the relationship with a student or a parent.

An educator may feel that he or she is being "color blind" and treating all students equally, regardless of race or cultural differences. In fact, well-intentioned teachers may choose to be color blind and insist that a child's race is not important to them. However, choosing to ignore culture or race and discounting it as a salient factor in the child's life and in the classroom may be a disservice to students of minority. Their race or culture has likely impacted many aspects of their lives, from family interactions and peer interactions, to simply shopping at the store or walking down the street. Research continues to show that those who look or speak differently from the majority are more likely viewed negatively in the schools and in workplaces; they may be seen as less intelligent, less qualified and less popular (Sue & Sue, 2003). In addition, even if educators feel they are truly color blind, they have still been influenced by their environment and may hold bias or prejudice subconsciously, which will affect their behavior. As Stephen Brookfield (1995) wrote, "Teaching can never be innocent." The complexities of learning and the impact of the power of the dominant culture complicate all relationships, including those of teachers and students.

Some questions follow that can help an educator think about culture. There are no right or wrong answers, but rather these questions can spur discussion and thought. It is also interesting to see if opinions change as cultural

awareness increases.

- Are concepts such as “fairness” and “intelligence” basic and easy to understand, regardless of ethnicity/culture?
- Should students from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds be given the same treatment that White students receive?
- Is it necessary for me to consider my racial identity to be an effective teacher?
- Is it important to educate students in cultural issues, even in a monocultural setting?

Recognize majority privilege

It may be difficult for educators to consider the impact that majority privilege in American society has upon both themselves and the students. Being a member of the majority in the United States means being White. Although a White person may not desire to be treated differently or with any special privileges, there are perks that come from being a member of the majority. For example, my freedom to walk into a store or a business without being eyed with suspicion; or comfort or security because most of the people in the room look like me; or the ability to speak about topics without people assuming my feelings are influenced by my race; or the box of bandages matches my skin tone. A White educator needs to acknowledge this idea before fully understanding students who are members of a minority culture. In addition, the educational system in the United

States was founded upon the values of Western culture and those values continue to permeate the educational system today (Durodoye, 1998; Sue & Sue, 2003). A White educator, therefore, has most likely been familiar with the ideals and expectations of the educational system from little on; students of minority may have had very different ideals impressed upon them in the home. It is also likely that White educators have faced less prejudice or racism than their culturally diverse students, a fact that can affect the student/teacher relationship.

Educators may not be consciously aware of facets of American society that research has found distinctly Western in nature. These include mastery over nature; future time orientation; doing-orientation; individual relationships; competition/winning means everything; majority rule decision making; rigid time schedules; certain holidays and celebrating birthdays; Protestant work ethic; objective/rational thought; and a nuclear family unit (Richardson & Molinaro, 1996). And as mentioned, the educational system in America tends to be a reflection of Western values and ideals as well (Durodoye, 1998).

Although the following examples from Sue and Sue (2003) should not be simply assumed for all members of that culture, they help to recognize some historical values of other cultures and illustrate the difference from the White majority: many American Indians value sharing and cooperation over individual achievement; in Latino culture, males are expected to be dominant and

females submissive, as opposed to equal partners; the African American family is frequently matriarchal, rather than patriarchal, and strong kinship bonds with extended family are highly valued; many Asian Americans feel that strong emotional displays are a sign of weakness.

As a member of the majority, a White educator may or may not see the ways in which majority privilege is carried out, however, they must recognize that they have directly or indirectly benefited from it and even from prejudice against minorities (Sue & Sue, 2003). McIntosh (1989, as cited in Sue & Sue, 2003) depicts it this way: members of the majority culture have a knapsack of unearned assets that can be used to receive advantages not given to those who don't fit the mold. Being aware of personal beliefs, biases, and privileges can improve cultural competence.

Practical applications for culturally competent educators

Once educators recognize the need for awareness and begin to develop it, they will be enabled to further their knowledge and skills in multicultural education in a more meaningful and practical way. They will also begin to recognize what multicultural students may be experiencing inside the classroom and outside of it, and how those experiences may be affecting the students and their learning. Here are some practical ideas for improving cultural atmosphere in classrooms and schools.

Some questions that an educator can

ask periodically are: am I tailoring the curriculum to be relevant to my students' interests, ambitions, and cultural identities? Am I aware of my students' learning styles and using appropriate strategies? Are the books and materials I use reflective of diversity? Are the images on the wall or bulletin board reflective of diversity (Weiner, 2005)?

Ten points by Sogunro (2001) can also help to improve multicultural education throughout the school and even among school families:

1. Students should study different cultural groups through literature and by hearing oral presentations from various people in the community.
2. Parents should be encouraged to tell their children about their family culture.
3. Students should be encouraged to talk about their family culture.
4. Students should be led to examine and develop appreciation for differences and similarities among cultural groups.
5. Students should reflect on cultural experiences and thoughts about new cultures that are studied.
6. Families should be encouraged to reinforce ethical and cultural values at home.
7. Students should demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes that contribute to the success of others.
8. Students should be placed in groups to work on projects related to cultures other than their own.
9. Students should be involved in role-play about the different cultures they have studied.

10. Multicultural activities in the classroom should be complemented with related field trips and tours.

In many WELS classrooms, diversity may not be present. The student body may be comprised of all White students. Must the educator still take culture into account? Even where there is a lack of diversity, there is a need for cultural awareness and education. Students must be equipped to be responsible citizens in our changing society; it also benefits students to learn to appreciate and value their personal culture and respect those of others, both in the classroom and when reaching out to others.

Helpful resources

The following resources can be helpful in increasing cultural awareness and/or offering ideas for incorporating tolerance and multicultural ideas into the classroom. The WELS educator should use them judiciously, as not all of the ideas and suggestions come from a Christian perspective. However, the author has found them enlightening and thought-provoking; there are many practical ideas that can be adapted for a Lutheran educator or classroom, as well. For more information and resources, feel free to contact the author of this article.

- Teaching Tolerance (www.tolerance.org) This was originally a program that was designed for educators to increase tolerance in their classrooms or student bodies by using educational materials, activities and events. Now at the convenient web-

site, any educator can subscribe to the Teaching Tolerance magazine at no cost and find many handouts and resources for educators or anyone interested in the topic of diversity, along with lists of additional resources.

- EdChange (www.edchange.org) This website is a wealth of information and has a variety of materials for educators to peruse; it has many resources that one can use immediately for self, or for the classroom.
- The Center for the Study of White American Culture: A Multiracial Organization (www.euroamerican.org) Editorials, links to research studies, conferences on multiculturalism and antiracism, an online library, and a list of more resources can be found at this website.
- “The Getting of Wisdom,” an article by Stephen Brookfield, is enlightening for educators who wish to improve cultural awareness. It offers particular values and biases to reflect upon. http://www.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/facultypapers/StephenBrookfield_Wisdom.cfm
- “So You Think You’re an Antiracist? Six Critical Paradigm Shifts for Well-Intentioned White Folks” is an article available through the EdChange website. This hard-hitting article names six areas that a White person can consider to increase awareness and challenge their biases. http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/resources/paradigmshifts_race.html
- A list of books recommended by

Teaching Tolerance as resources for educators can be found at <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/sidebar.jsp?p=0&si=996>

Conclusion

WELS educators have received a quality education, grounded solidly in the Word of God and designed to equip them to serve all students and their families. In this changing society, culture is just another factor affecting students. Cultural awareness can make multicultural knowledge and skills more useful and effective, helping WELS educators to better serve and reach out to all people. ✦

REFERENCES

- Broderick, P.C. and Blewitt, P. (2003). *The life span: Human development for helping professionals*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Brookfield, S. (1995). The getting of wisdom: What critically reflective teaching is and why it's important. Retrieved on August 27, 2006, from http://www.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/facultypapers/StephenBrookfield_AdultLearning.cfm
- Durodoye, B. (1998). Fostering multicultural awareness among teachers: A tripartite model. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(5), 9-14. Retrieved on October 14, 2006, through the Academic Search Premier database.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, attendance status, and level of student: Selected years, 1976 through 2004*. Retrieved on October 18, 2006, at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_205.asp
- Richardson, T.Q. and Molinaro, K.L. (1996). White counselor self-awareness: A prerequisite for developing multicultural competence. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 74, 238-242.
- Sogunro, O.A. (2001). Toward multiculturalism: Implications of multicultural education for schools. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 3(3), 19-33. Retrieved on October 14, 2006, through EBSCOhost database.
- Sue, D.W. and Sue, D. (2003). *Counseling the culturally diverse: theory and practice* (4th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Townsend, B.L. (2002). Leave no teacher behind: A bold proposal for teacher education. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(6), 727-738. Retrieved on April 24, 2006, through the EBSCOhost database.
- Weiner, H. (2005). Culturally insulated students: Assessing the diversity disposition gap in a predominantly white university with a new instrument, the Culturally Responsive Educator Test. *Journal of Authentic Learning*, 2(1), 7-21.

Micelle Ross graduated from Martin Luther College in 2001. She has taught at Peridot Lutheran School on the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona and is presently teaching at Christ Lutheran School in North St. Paul, MN.

Cooperating Classroom Supervisors: “the Experience” Teachers

Paul A. Tess

CONSIDER THIS SINGLE multiple choice item.

Student teaching

- a) is a nine credit course that provides an opportunity to learn effective teacher behavior through observation and practice.
- b) provides a student teacher with a setting to practice principles learned in general and professional education courses.
- c) helps to develop a better understanding of the relationships that exist among Christian elementary education, the responsibilities of a teaching minister, and the entire life of a congregation.
- d) is hearing the words, “Who’s going to teach us when you’re gone?”
- e) is all of the above, and more!

(Response sources- MLC

Undergraduate Catalog; MLC Student Teaching Handbook; MLC Teacher Education Handbook; 2006 MLC student teacher; respectively)

Student teaching represents an important milestone in the pre-service education of Martin Luther College

Studies in Educational Ministry (SEM) students. The nature of the experience is captured in various perspectives as described in the annotations. The viability and reliability of the MLC student teaching program requires several critical components such as prepared student teachers, an authoritative handbook containing guidelines and structure, qualified college supervisors, and willing classroom supervisors. Though each component merits extensive consideration, this article will address the single piece of the supervising classroom teacher. The purpose of this article is two-fold: to provide the context for the important role of the cooperating teacher in the MLC student teaching program; and to invite and encourage participation in this vital function in the preparation of future teaching ministers.

The context of student teaching

Historically, nearly all teacher education programs have featured a three-prong approach to preparing educators for classrooms: liberal, professional, and

experiential (Null, 2007). The liberal or liberal arts prong builds the content knowledge, skills, and understandings across a broad spectrum of disciplines such as mathematics, social sciences, and communication arts (and in the case of Martin Luther College, theology). The professional component of a teacher education program highlights the foundations of the teaching profession, the pedagogy of the disciplines and the science of learning. Finally, the

Studies consistently support the positive effect that student teaching has in terms of teacher preparation and the transfer of learning from pre-service training to the real-world classroom.

experiential elements of a teacher preparation curriculum emphasize working in educational settings (e.g., student teaching) under the guidance and direction of practicing professionals.

Although debate about the merits or necessity of each prong has been deliberate and on-going, changes to the three-prong approach have not gone beyond the discussion table. Most teach-

er training institutions have maintained the philosophical basis of the previously noted triad (i.e., liberal, professional, experiential). What has changed, however, throughout the last one hundred years is the relative emphasis that each area receives. At times extreme positions relegated the liberal arts aspect to second or third fiddle. For example, the early 20th century normal schools touted the experiential arm of the teacher education curriculum (Blackwell, Futrell, & Imig, 2003). Rather than a competition, a reasoned balance among the three areas has been seen not only as a solution, but as the preferred modus operandi.

A brief history recounting the role of experiential training in the curriculum of (D)MLC is an example of the shift toward a more balanced pre-service education program. Prior to 1964 all DMLC students had one clinical experience called practice teaching which occurred at St. Paul's Lutheran School in New Ulm, MN. The experience's length changed from time to time (varying from two to six weeks) as natural adjustments to the student teaching program were made. Of note, students were responsible for all course work missed while teaching full-time at St. Paul's.

Following the decision in 1964 to move to off-campus placements outside of New Ulm and to lengthen the student teaching term to eight weeks, experiential training in schools and congregations in the Appleton and Watertown areas of Wisconsin was inaugurated. Student teaching remained the one critical professional practice experi-

ence through the remainder of most of the 20th century.

By 1990 a desire to increase experiential training brought about a change in the number and types of clinical experiences. For example, early field experiences (EFE) in classroom settings were added that were to be completed during the sophomore and junior years. Today students participate in no less than 775 hours (400 in student teaching) of documented experiences ranging from freshmen EFE week on the MLC campus to five weeks in an area public school setting during the senior year. Student teaching for nine or ten weeks in Lutheran schools remains the capstone experience for ministry training for MLC Studies in Educational Ministry students.

Why should we call student teaching the capstone course for our SEM students? Studies consistently support the positive effect that student teaching has in terms of teacher preparation and the transfer of learning from pre-service training to the real-world classroom. Some studies assert that student teaching is the single most powerful component of a teacher education program (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). General examples from recent research of the positive effects include learning about students, recognizing that students vary widely in their understandings, and gaining survival or coping skills (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002).

Data from a study (DMLC, 1996) of critical supervising teacher behaviors of DMLC's student teaching program

showed a high degree of satisfaction among students. Melendy (2004) found that MLC student teachers gained significant confidence on selected standards of effective practice. For many of the readers of this article, personal observation and reflection as a participant in student teaching would serve as further evidence of the importance of the experience.

What does it mean to be a teaching minister? What are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers in our WELS schools require? The liberal arts and professional components of the MLC teacher education track provide only two parts of the answer. Student teaching allows theory to be brought into the light of practice. Student teaching allows "knowing that" to become "knowing how" (Gage, 1978). Student teaching provides an opportunity to learn effective teacher behavior through observation and practice (MLC Undergraduate Catalog).

Encouragement and invitation

The role of the cooperating classroom supervisor is one of the most important components of program structure. As such, studies of student teaching programs invariably focus attention on the veteran teachers who serve as the mentors or guides of professional practice. Findings suggest that the cooperating teacher's role can be grouped according to five or six topics. The topical groups (and examples) typically include the following: content knowledge (share curricular resources and guide in

their use); instructional practice (model and demonstrate effective teaching strategies); student assessment (discuss how to use assessments to plan and design curriculum); communication (provide on going feedback verbally and in writing); professionalism (model how teaching is a life long learning process); ministry (demonstrate a servant's heart) (Pelletier, 2000).

Perhaps a question or two have now arisen. Do I have "the right stuff" to serve as a mentor to a future called worker? What are the critical attributes one should possess to be an effective role model? When asked these questions, a group of DMLC student teachers responded this way: provided early opportunities for me to participate in classroom activities; showed respect for me and was fully aware that respect must be mutual; exhibited a sense of dedication, commitment, and sincere enthusiasm; permitted me to assume more and more responsibility as I gained self confidence; permitted me freedom to learn from my own mistakes; established a climate of trust which permitted me to feel free to discuss my limitations and expectations; and permitted me freedom to work out an idea to completion, even if it differed from the manner in which the supervising teacher would have completed the activity (DMLC, 1996).

Perhaps, a third question remains. How can I ever hope to fulfill all those expectations? A simple answer would be that one grows into it. The task of cooperating teacher is never terminal in terms of skill growth. In fact, progress-

ing in the skills and knowledge of a supervising teacher serves as a wonderful mirror for the concomitant development of the student teacher. Although phrases such as "Susan is a born teacher" or "Jared's a natural" may fit in some instances for teaching, such phrases

*Progressing in the
skills and knowledge
of a supervising
teacher serves as a
wonderful mirror for
the concomitant
development of the
student teacher.*

would be seldom used of a description of cooperating teachers. Rather the apropos phrase might be that a supervising teacher is not a "know-it-all", but a "done-it-some."

The role of cooperating teacher requires an additional skill set beyond the role of classroom instructor. Each summer a week-long workshop for classroom supervisors is offered through the MLC Clinical Experiences Office. Participants practice a variety of essential skills and gain valuable resources to enable them to serve more effectively and efficiently. One of the goals of the Clinical Experiences Office is that all supervising teachers receive the benefits of that workshop at some point either

Tess

before or during their work as supervisors. As added encouragement, all expenses including travel and credit fees are paid by MLC.

Those of you that currently serve or have served as cooperating teachers know the blessings that come from guiding and encouraging soon-to-be called workers. Reflecting on one's own practice, gaining another opportunity "to prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12), and finding delight in watching our Lord mold a future colleague are among the numerous blessings. On behalf of MLC and the student teaching program grateful thanks is extended for your work. This important point should not be missed and bears repeating- thank you. The invitation to this group of valued partners is to continue to serve in this critical role.

The same blessings await those of you who would consider joining the corps of supervisors of student teachers. You are invited! The need for more supervisors is continual. Changes in ministry, moves to different areas, and new programs and licensing requirements make recruitment of new supervisors an annual effort. The guidelines for selecting classroom supervisors include a principal's endorsement, having at least two years of teaching experience, and holding a current state teaching license. Contact your principal, a college student teaching supervisor, our Clinical Experiences Office, or myself to discuss serving in the role of cooperating classroom supervisor: "the experience" teacher. ☛

REFERENCES

- Blackwell, P. J., Futrell, M. H., & Imig, D. G. (2003). Burnt water paradoxes of schools of education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(5), 356-361.
- Dr. Martin Luther College student teaching program: assessment of supervising teacher behavior. (1996). New Ulm, MN: Dr. Martin Luther College.
- Gage, N. L., (1978). The yield of research on teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 60(3), 229-235.
- Melendy, C. E. (2004). Student teacher confidence and the Minnesota standards of effective practice. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest Information and Learning Company (UMI 3119174).
- Null, J.W. (2007). Curriculum for teachers: four traditions within pedagogical philosophy. *Educational Studies*, 42(1), 43-63.
- Pelletier, C.M. (2000). *A handbook of techniques and strategies for coaching student teachers* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Wilson, S.M., Floden, R.E., & Ferrini-Mundy, J. (2002). Teacher preparation research: an insider's view from the outside. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(3), 190-204.

Paul Tess is the Director of Clinical Experiences at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN.

Paras

Alan Spurgin

FOR THE LUTHERAN ELEMENTARY school, paras may not be a familiar word. However, for the public schools, paras has been in the vernacular for the past ten to twenty years (Keller, Gucholz, & Grady, 2007). What started out as a “teacher’s aide” has now moved into the status of a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals have become part of the education mix, especially as part of the inclusion movement where more and more special education services are being offered in the regular classroom (Gaingreco, Edelman, & Broer, 2001). What is the impact of paraprofessionals in the classroom? What are the qualifications of a paraprofessional? What is the feasibility and importance of having paraprofessionals in the LES? These questions are vital for education in the Christian Day School in the 21st century.

In the past, paraprofessionals have provided services in the schools in the arena of assisting students with personal care, providing supervision in group settings, facilitating social skills/peer interactions, doing clerical tasks, and engaging in follow-up instruction with children in tutoring sessions or homework help (Gaingreco, Yuan, McKenzie et al 2005). However, the role of the paraprofessional has changed to be a funda-

mental part of the instruction, review, and reinforcement of lessons as well as interacting with parents. French (2008) states paraprofessionals may suggest or carry out lesson plans, modify instructional materials based on the directions provided by the general or special education teachers, and (under the direction of the teacher) contact parents to set up meetings or share specific information on the child. Paraprofessionals have become part of the landscape and play an important role in the education of children. Indeed, the job of the paraprofessional looks more and more like those of teachers where they help with the instructional tasks and sometimes teach small groups of students.

Along with the changing role comes the question of qualifications of the paraprofessional. In the past, the “teacher’s aide” was sometimes a volunteer or a family helper who came into the classroom on a part-time bases to help with the children. The “teacher’s aide” would do tasks to free up the teacher to perform more vital tasks in the classroom and beyond. In the public schools, the “teacher’s aide” performed jobs and assumed duties during lunch and recess to relieve the teacher of these tasks. With the assuming of more curricular and instruction responsibilities, it became clear the paraprofession-

al must be better qualified to assume the tasks. In addition, the directive of recent legislation which encouraged “highly qualified” teachers, the qualifications of the paraprofessional were raised. In fact, suggestions were made as to where the paraprofessional would receive training: roles and responsibilities, learner characteristics, cultural diversity, data collection, behavioral and instructional strategies, and health-related issues and procedures (Keller, Gucholz, & Grady, 2007). A strong push

The Lutheran elementary school is a quality environment which is blessed to have paraprofessionals to help the children.

is underway to require the professional to have an associate’s degree and pass a qualifying examination to be eligible to be a paraprofessional. The bar is being raised to be a qualified paraprofessional in the 21st century schools.

What does all this have to do with the Lutheran elementary school? The growing number of students with identifiable and documented disabilities has expanded appreciably. The number of students with disabilities in the LES has grown along with the national averages. It would not be presumptuous to

assume ten to fifteen percent of children in the LES have an identifiable disability, and the number is likely to rise. Be it a behavior problem, a learning disability, an attention problem, or a pervasive developmental disorder (Autism), the LES has and will continue to encounter children with disabilities. On a positive note, the LES has successfully and effectively worked with diverse learners in the past and will continue to do so in the future. In addition, the landscape of the LES classroom has seen a number of volunteer and helpers successfully working with children. In increasing numbers, paid aides are used in the LES classroom to help the children with disabilities. Although no hard data exists, anecdotally the number of paraprofessionals is on the increase in the LES.

The commitment to top quality education in the LES is foremost. Having paraprofessionals in the LES classroom would add to the education of the children in the classroom. Initially, the pupil/teacher ratio is arguably cut in half when a paraprofessional is included in the classroom. The adult/child contact is increased therefore offering more opportunity for the child to receive one-on-one or small group interactions. The emotional and social support may also be enhanced providing the child with more than one adult to meet these needs. Paraprofessionals are committed to children and willingly help beyond the academics the education program. Should a child have an enveloping disability, such as a child with Aspergers Syndrome, he or she

may need a shadow paraprofessional (one who remains with the child in all settings).

The commitment to care for as many children in the congregation as possible may require an outlay of money to pay for the paraprofessional. Although congregational budgets may be quite tight, it still takes the whole congregation to raise a child. Some congregations have passed resolutions to make the commitment to educate all children in the congregation with paraprofessionals being part of the commitment. These congregations should be commended for taking such a stand.

Paraprofessionals are not, however, a panacea for the classroom. Giangreco, Yuan, et. al. (2005) suggest a number of cautions and negative effects of paraprofessionals in the regular classroom. The negatives include: the least qualified person in the classroom instructing the child with the most challenging learning or behavior problems; the regular and special education teachers spending less time with the learner who struggles; the learner becoming too dependent on the paraprofessional; and the concern of inadequate training of the paraprofessional to meet the individual needs of the child with a learning or behavior problem. Keeping the precautions in mind will help the paraprofessional fulfill his or her role in the overall education of the child who has learning or behavior problems.

Paras or paraprofessionals serve to help the teacher work with struggling children in the classroom. Much good can be achieved by having a paraprofes-

sional work with the children to enhance their education. The Lutheran elementary school is a quality environment which is blessed to have paraprofessionals to help the children. It takes a commitment by the congregation to provide the paraprofessionals who maximize the educational potential of the children in the Christian day schools. ♣

REFERENCES

- French, N. (2008). Supervising paraeducators – What every teacher should know. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Paraeducators&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=36&ContentID=5599>
- Giangreco, M., Edelman, S., & Broer, S. (2001). Respect, appreciation, and acknowledgement of paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 67(4), 485-498.
- Giangreco, M., Yuan, S., McKenzie, B., Cameron, P., & Failka, J. (2005). "Be careful what wish for..." Five reasons to be concerned about the assignment of individual paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*. 37(5), 28-34.
- Keller, C., Bucholz, J., & Brady, M. (2007). Yes, I can! Empowering paraprofessionals to teach learning strategies. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 39(3), 18-23.

Alan Spurgin teaches at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN.

Ask Questions

Paul L. Willems

I HAVE FOUND when teaching religion to high school juniors and seniors that lecturing sometimes works, but more often than not this technique turns the students off and their attention drifts. Their thoughts turn elsewhere because they believe they already know the material. They have been taught Bible truths for many years. They have been confirmed. They can read your outlines for themselves. They believe they can do the assigned worksheets without too much thinking, and too often their responses to the questions on the assignment clearly show they have done just that. They are not interested in hearing again those basic Bible truths. Simple lectures fail to move them. PowerPoint® presentations have become old hat by the eleventh and twelfth grades, and the overhead projector and videos just don't cut it either.

As I've struggled to reach these students in my classroom, the method of catechesis came to mind—a method that has been part of the church for centuries. And even before the church had catechumens, Jesus had disciples and taught them in a similar fashion, through pointed questioning.

When Jesus walked with two disciples toward Emmaus after his resurrection, he was able to open their minds to the Old Testament prophecies and their ful-

fillment in himself by asking them questions. The disciples had heard these prophecies many times. They had the head knowledge of Scripture, but they just didn't see the application to their present circumstances until Jesus asked, "What things?"

Jesus also questioned Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" We can see while Peter could say the correct words, his actions and continued comments indicated he, too, did not really understand who the Christ, or Messiah, was and what his work on earth demanded.

If Martin Luther wrote a catechism as his chosen method to assist the heads of households in instructing their children, who am I to blow against the wind?

Using this questioning method in my class one day, the lesson sounded something like this:

Teacher: Let's continue with our study of the Church Year. We are in November and the Church Year is coming to a close. We usually use this time to speak of the topic of eschatology. "Does anyone know what eschatology is?" Pause. "Please use your dictionaries to look up the word." Teacher spells the word, "e-s-c-h-a-t-o-l-o-g-y."

Bobby: "Eschatology is the doctrine of the last things."

Teacher: "Thank you, Bobby." Writes the title of the lesson on the board:
Eschatology is the Doctrine of the Last Things.

Teacher: "Bobby, can you think of the last thing in your life?"

Mary: "Finally graduating, right, Bob?"

Teacher: "Mary, what might be the last thing in your life?"

Sam: "Getting a date." Class laughs.

Teacher: "What is the last thing in your life, Sam, as well as in Mary's and in Bob's life?"

Sam: "I suppose we all have to die."

Teacher: "Good. What does it mean to die? Pause. "Alice?"

Alice: "It's when you stop breathing."

Teacher: "Yes. However, I have always been puzzled by God's promise to Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They didn't stop breathing. How do you explain this? Did God lie?"

Tim: "God can't lie!"

Teacher: "Then how do you explain what God said to Adam and Eve?"

Tim: "I don't know."

Teacher: "What happened to Adam and Eve after they ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?"

Jenny: "They hid in the bushes."

Teacher: "Why?"

Jenny: "They were afraid. They felt guilty."

Teacher: "What happened then?"

Frank: "God talked to them."

Teacher: "What else happened to Adam and Eve?"

Heidi: "God kicked them out of the

Garden."

Teacher: "How did eating fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil change their relationship with God?"

Rachel: "They couldn't talk with God face to face any more."

Teacher: "What name can we give to this relationship?"

Dan: "Strained."

Teacher: "Yes, but even more than strained?"

Jackie: "God was angry."

Teacher: "What about the relationship between God and Adam and Eve?"

Allen: "They weren't together any more."

Teacher: "Can you say that in one word?"

Katie: "Separated."

Teacher: "What did God say would happen to Adam and Eve if they ate the forbidden fruit?"

Hannah: "They would die."

Teacher: "Then what is a definition of death?"

Tom: "Perhaps death is a separation."

Teacher: "Good." Teacher writes on the board under the lesson title, "A. Death is separation." What death did Adam and Eve experience when they ate the fruit?"

Patty: "They were spiritually separated from God."

Teacher: "All right. We could call this spiritual death. What death is seen at a funeral?"

Fred: "Separation from life?"

Teacher: "That's true. Could someone add to that statement?"

Same: "Separation of body and soul."

Teacher: "Great! We sometimes call this

type of death, temporal death. What happens to the soul?"

Kim: "It goes to heaven."

Teacher: "What about the soul of an unbeliever?"

Alice: "It goes to hell."

Teacher: "What kind of death occurs then?"

Sally: "Eternal death."

Teacher: "Okay." Teacher writes the three types of death under the subtopic "A, Death is a Separation: 1. Spiritual separation, 2. Separation of body and soul, 3. Eternal death."

Joe: "How about the end of the world, or Judgment Day. Isn't that about the last things too?"

Teacher: "Very good, Joe." Teacher writes, "B. Judgment Day" as the next sub-point.

Carrin: "How about the Holocaust? Wasn't that a last thing?"

Teacher: "What about Carrin's suggestion of the Holocaust? Is this another sub-point about eschatology?"

We could go on and follow the side point that Carrin raised, but the conversation thus far is illustrative enough.

The question-and-answer technique can be fast moving. The teacher must strive to adjust the lesson outline to the student's answers whenever possible. The teacher should write the student's statements on the board in their own words. In the lesson example above, perhaps the teacher's outline of the lesson looked something like that on the left, below. The actual outline written on the board produced by the questioning technique was somewhat different as seen on the right.

We can see how the Student Generated Outline differed from the Teacher Prepared Outline (See Table 1). So far the two sub-points common to both, Death and Last Day, are both there, but they are in the reverse order and the sub point, last day, has been renamed Judgment Day by the student class response. In using a catechetical method of instruction, the teacher mod-

TABLE 1

Teacher Prepared Outline	Student Generated Outline
Eschatology	Eschatology is the Doctrine of Last Things
A. The definition of eschatology	A. Death is a separation
B. The Last Day	B. Judgment Day
1. The definition of "last day"	1. Spiritual separation
2. When	2. Separation of body and soul
3. Basis for the judgment	3. Eternal Death
C. Death	
1. Definition of death	
2. Types of death	
a) Spiritual death,	
b) Temporal death,	
c) Eternal death	

ified the prepared lesson outline and wrote down the student responses instead. This is an example of a presentation which is designed to make the lesson a part of the students personal life. This method helps students to remain focused on the lesson and helps them to better remember the lesson by seeing and writing notes of what they actually said in class rather than writing what they heard the teacher say. As can be seen by the responses from the classroom discussion, the students are actively participating in the lesson. They have become involved. The lesson has taken on personal meaning for them. We can call this an example of authentic instruction. Much of the abstractness of the lesson has been removed and the discussion demonstrates the content has become more concrete and meaningful to the students. The teacher can also assess whether or not the students understand the lesson.

This method follows instruction and does not lead it. The students “know”, or think they already know the material

being presented by the instructor. The lesson material has already been presented at some time in the past. However, by the use of questions the instructor can assess what the students have grasped or have partially understood and the instructor can also promote discussion of the material and drive home critical points of the lesson. When these goals are accomplished, the students will take home much more from the lesson than if they are simply asked to sit passively and try to absorb a lecture, a PowerPoint® presentation or a video on the material you wish to cover during the class hour. Try it as a way of putting variety into the form of your lesson presentations. You might like it, and, what is more, your students may get more out of their lessons and begin looking forward to your class. Even more important, the students might better remember the lesson and apply it to their lives. ✪

Paul Willems teaches at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, MN.

REVIEWS

REVIEWS

Hartwig, Theodore J. *Faith Active in Love: Meditations on the Letter of James*. New Ulm MN: Eagles' Wings Publishing, 2007. 73 p.

The epistle of James is a pointedly practical letter on Christian living. A new little devotional commentary by Prof. emeritus Ted Hartwig serves well

to apply the points of James' book to the lives of Christians today.

Hartwig acknowledges that James “may not be a candidate for favorite reading in the New Testament,” but we do ourselves no favors by neglecting this epistle. “All of us stand in need of what James teaches in this letter” (p.3). The book of James often has been

maligned for being loaded with law and lacking in gospel. But, as Hartwig well explains, James had urgent reasons for writing as he did. Among the fellow Christians to whom James wrote, evil seemed to be winning the battle for their souls. “So James’ deep love for them compelled him to compose a letter that was full of law thunder. His goal was to bring them to genuine repentance which not only professed but lived the gospel” (p.50).

To aid us in engaging with James’ message, Hartwig offers thirty-six brief expositions—a page or page-and-a-half each—walking us through the progression of James’ inspired thought. Along the way, we are treated to an array of historical references, grammatical notes, word studies, helpful illustrations, and quotations/allusions ranging from

church fathers and the Lutheran Confessions to Dante, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. While that may sound like the makings of heavy reading, *Faith Active in Love* flows smoothly and simply. The style of the booklet is pithy and direct. The form fits somewhere between *The People’s Bible* and *Meditations*—part verse-by-verse commentary, part devotional reflection, each segment ending with an appropriate thought in prayer. The overall effect is edifying.

Faith Active in Love is available in the Martin Luther College bookstore, or may be ordered by mail from Eagles’ Wings Publishing, 1622 N. Payne Street, New Ulm MN 56073. Book cost is \$4.50, plus additional \$1.50 for shipping/handling.

DS